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Public Affairs Section

NEWS RELEASE

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137 New Peace Corps Volunteers Take Their Oath of Helping Filipinos

In simultaneous swearing-in ceremonies in Pasig City and Bacolod City today, the 269th batch of Peace Corps Volunteers took their oath to serve their country by helping Filipinos in different parts of Luzon and Visayas.

In Bacolod City, 71 volunteers took their oath before U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr. at the Negros Occidental Provincial Capitol. The event was witnessed by local government officials from Negros Occidental led by Governor Alfredo Marañon, Jr., representatives of local partner agencies, and host families of the Peace Corps Volunteers.

In Pasig City, U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Leslie A. Bassett led the swearing-in ceremonies at the Meralco Complex where 66 new volunteers were inducted by Peace Corps Philippines Country Director Sonia Derenoncourt.

"As you graduate from your training program, know that the work that you will do and relationships you will form continue to build on the Peace Corps legacy of making a positive difference in this world," said Ambassador Thomas in his message to the new volunteers.

Peace Corps Philippines is the second oldest Peace Corps program in the world (Ghana being the first). Over 8000 volunteers have served in the Philippines since 1961, the most of any Peace Corps Program. At present, there are 216 volunteers being hosted by Filipinos all over Luzon and Visayas, including the 269th batch. *This represents an 80 percent increase, from 120 volunteers one year ago.*

"I thank you for opening your homes, your work place, your communities to our Peace Corps Volunteers," said Ambassador Thomas in his message to the Filipino hosts and friends of the volunteers.

Since 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship.

For more information on the Peace Corps, please visit: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/>.

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